



Dialogue across knowledge systems and communities of interests: foresters in La Chiquitania, Bolivia

**Jorge Téllez (Universidad de Córdoba), Rafael Navarro (Universidad de Córdoba)
and Jacques Chevalier (Carleton University)**

Key Words

Validation, Stakeholder Identification, Social Analysis C.L.I.P., The Wheel, Social Domain, V.I.P., Freelisting, Ideal Scenario, Order and Chaos, A.R.T., Process Manager, Generic Methods, Forum, Internacional Development, Bolivia, Forestry, Sustainable Development, Livelihood, Municipal Government, Consultants, Rural Development

Context

- Timber extracted in the Chiquitania region of Bolivia generates products with high commercial value on international markets.
- People living in the region's communities do not perceive the sustainable use of forest land as a viable alternative to other livelihoods, such as intensive cattle ranching. The main reason is that middlemen purchase community forest timber at very low prices, thus taking advantage of communities that are among the poorest in Bolivia.
- In 2004, in an effort to improve community livelihoods, municipal governments and the Spanish cooperation agency launched a project to strengthen the value added chain of forest products.
- Since the sector was marked by political, economic, and social interests, the project sought assistance from the SAS² Project coordinated by the Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidisciplinarios (CEBEM) in La Paz, Bolivia, and the Centro de Investigaciones Aplicadas al Desarrollo Agroforestal (IDAF) of the Universidad de Córdoba (Spain).



Tools

- **Generic tools:** archival research, in-depth interviews, stakeholder analysis, validation fora, logical framework.
- **SAS² tools:** Validation, Stakeholder Identification, Social Analysis C.L.I.P., The Wheel, Social Domain, V.I.P., Freelisting, Ideal Scenario, Order and Chaos, A.R.T., Process Manager.
- **New and/or adapted:** Progress and Prediction, Supply and Demand Matrix, Network Graphs, Resource Mapping, Relevance Analysis and Business Planning in Nine Questions

Participants

- Mayors in the region convened meetings attended by community members, forest technicians, international volunteers, and timber merchants

Examples of Results

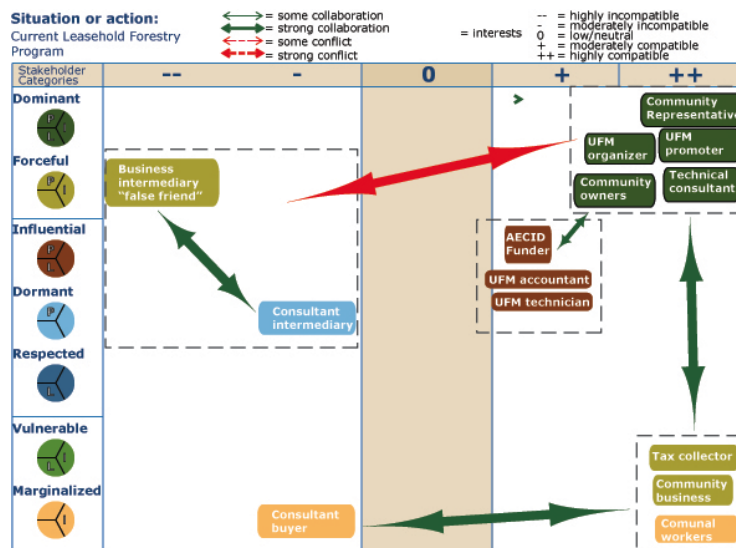
Participants used **Social Analysis CLIP** to gain a better understanding of how their interests could be affected by the marketing of community forest timber.

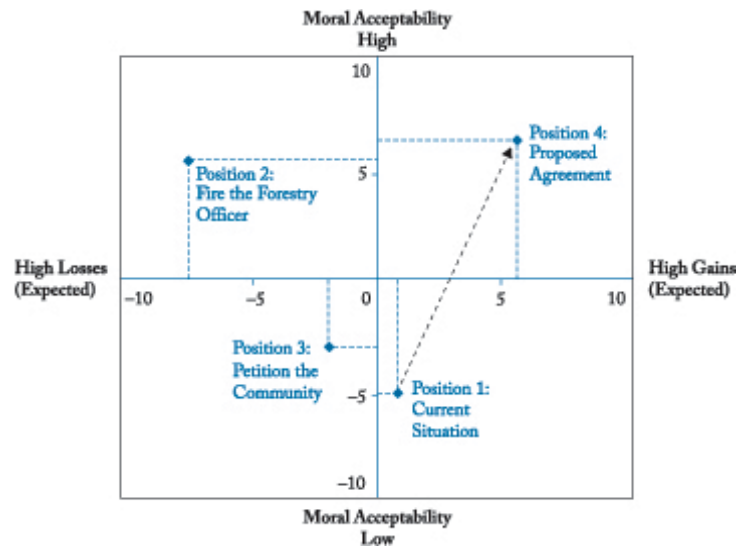
- The analysis revealed a direct link between the traditional middleman and the forestry consultant working for the communities—a consultant with access to key information and trusted by the communities to provide assistance in marketing decisions.
- This conflict of interest meant the consultant could effectively block the development of community business projects.
- This finding created tensions and conflict among participants.



To resolve the conflict, **V.I.P.** was used to introduce a new factor in the analysis: the values that stakeholders hold.

- At the start, the analysis focused on how the conflict would affect the interests of the participants as well as the values they hold (scenario 0).
- The discussion then shifted to what would happen (scenarios 1 and 2) if key stakeholders pursued the radical positions adopted during the workshop.
- Participants then chose to develop a final scenario (scenario 3) that would benefit everyone.
- This involved an agreement whereby the project would market the timber that could not be transformed locally, under the best possible conditions, with the assistance of the consultant and with transparency. This way everyone would win.





Outcomes

- Using the tools allowed participants to unblock the marketing of community project timber and, more importantly, explore forestry activities to generate value added.
- Initial economic benefits were distributed within the community and helped to reinforce support for strategies to combine business activities with social involvement in Chiquitanía.
- The final result was a development strategy that secured major financial support for the sector.
-



SAS² contributions

SAS² provided the methods needed to launch a development strategy in a sector and a region where little experience existed and other attempts to do the same had failed. The methods made it possible to:

1. Establish a semi-structured process that could generate an initial plan that was needed to get financial support and that was flexible enough so field activities could adjust to real events
2. Conduct a progressive stakeholder analysis and achieve a common understanding of the interests affected by the exploitation of communal forest resources
3. Create an effective dialogue between stakeholders and the different knowledge systems that come into play, leading to solutions that are practical.

Looking forward

- Beyond making things considerably more predictable in Chiquitania, applying these methods in a practical way allowed an author of this report to produce a doctoral thesis on social interaction and process management in forest development.
- Using SAS² tools and concepts highlighted the weakness of common definitions within Community Forest Development. Those definitions view community life as a closed environment; they exclude social factors and relations that are more complex and interactive.
- To consolidate this new approach to social forestry and community forest development at the international level, it is important to pursue the new methods applied in this project.